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mena were common to the Al Rimal or Al Ramla (Rub'al Khali) and were always the work of Jinns (spirits).

(*d*) Individual Murra, he said, themselves often came out of the great desert "mad", which made them sing and laugh in strange manner. This was undoubtedly due to Jinn influence.

(*e*) The word Rub' al Khali, he said, was a *hadhar* or townsman's expression, and Badawin did not know the name, and he himself had only once or twice heard it.

(*f*) Rashid knew seven of Philby's guides personally when he made his great trans-desert journey; one of them, Falah abu Ja'sha, was his cousin. (See page 10 of Philby's book; also first part of this chapter.)

THE DEAD WOMAN WHO NURSED HER CHILD

(Recounted by Dhuwaihi bin Kharmit of the 'Awazim on 21st April, 1935, in camp at Malah, Kuwait.)

A man of the 'Awazim was once travelling near Hail with his young wife. The latter was with child, and in a gorge between some high rocky hills she suddenly gave birth to a baby boy, but in the process died. Her husband did all he could for her, but as he was alone, he could not save her. He buried her by putting her body in a small cave nearby, and filled up the entrance with stones. Loth to remove the child, and knowing it would shortly die for lack of milk, he laid it on its mother's breast with her left arm round it, and put the mother's left breast to the baby's mouth. He then rode away.

Nine months later a party of Badawin of the same tribe happened to wander by and camp close to the spot where the woman and child had been buried. Knowing the story they went to the cave's mouth to see if the wall was intact. To their surprise they found a few stones removed and a hole in the wall; outside on the sand they found the tracks of a child's feet running all over the ground. In great fear and filled with superstition they quickly rode away from the haunted place. In course of time the Badawin told the father, who hastened to the spot, and found the hole in the wall and the small footmarks. Looking inside the cave, he found a live boy-child sitting and prattling beside the mummified form of his dead wife. The mother's body was all dried up, except her left eye and the left side of her face, her left

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CHAPTER XXVII

Desert Guides and Trackers

622 On 27th November, 1935, I visited and had a long talk with Shaikh
619 Mutluq al Musailim, the paramount chief of the Rashaida, in his camp. Among other things he admitted that his tribe was related to the great Hutaim group lying east of Madina. This is the powerful group whose paramount shaikhs are Ibn Barák and Ibn Naumas, and which as a whole is an "inferior" tribe.

485 He maintained that his people, the Rashaida, possessed without exception the finest guides throughout Arabia. He had men, he said, who could guide a stranger without any preparation from Kuwait to

(*a*) Damascus
(*b*) Amman
(*c*) Wejh
(*d*) Madina
(*e*) Mecca
(*f*) Ebha
(*g*) Najran
(*h*) Wadi Dawasir
(*i*) Riyadh and its environs
(*j*) Hasa and Qatar

485 The best guide in all Arabia was, in his opinion, Ibn Hadhabba of
828 his tribe, now employed by Bin Sa'ud on his permanent staff. Ibn
151 Hadhabba was one of a family of that name, all of whom, even the women, seemed to be endowed with the same skill. The gift was born in these men, he said, not acquired in any way, and was akin to the sort of fifth sense an animal possessed. It mattered not if the sun shone or not by day, or if the sky was overcast at night, the Rashaidi could find his way anywhere. He never forgot a desert feature once seen, however small and insignificant.

On the other hand, Shaikh Mutluq admitted freely that his own tribe were not trackers. The palm in this science went easily to the Al Murra tribe of South Hasa and Jabrin. Tracking, or *ma'arifat al jarra* as it was called, was entirely different from the science of guiding or *ma'arifat al dalála*. The latter implied perfect knowledge of ground with a perfect eye for country, stars, etc., the former was more un-

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canny, and consisted in an almost animal faculty for following up the tracks of man, camel, horse or sheep, and describing from the tracks the exact type of person or animal that had left its spoor. For instance, it was easy for a Murri, he said, to say whether the tracks of a simple single camel were those of a white camel (*wadha*), or a brown camel (*humra*), or a black camel (*sauda*), and still easier to say if it was male or female, in calf or not.

The Murra skill was so great, contended Shaikh Mutluq, that in following the tracks of a human female a tracker could say whether the person was married or single, and whether she was pregnant or not.

I have myself observed some very remarkable examples of Murra skill, and have been told numberless others by men like H.M. King 'Abdul 'Aziz al Sa'ud, who would have no reason to exaggerate. The Murra tribe are related to the 'Ajman, and both claim descent from Yam, the ancestor of the Bani Yam of Najran in North-East Yaman. Possibly their origin is Himyaritic. All three tribes are considered *sharif* tribes, and in appearance are all more or less alike. They have broad foreheads, eyes set wide apart, and chin running into a sharp small point. This is especially the case with the women. The apparently weak chin is, in the case of the man, usually hidden by a finer beard than is common among other Badawin.

The following is a personal experience. In February 1920 I was riding from Hufuf to Ojair in Hasa by a rather more circuitous and southern route than that usually used, as I wanted to examine the nature of certain ground. I had been the guest of Bin Sa'ud in Hufuf for some seventeen days. My escort consisted of twelve of Bin Sa'ud's braves under a youth called Báni. This fine young lad told me that he had just arrived in Hufuf from Riyadh for the first time in his life, and therefore had to depend on others' knowledge of the country. Half way to the coast we met an enormous herd of Murra camels with numerous baby camels slowly grazing in a northerly direction. The country was dune country and we did not see a soul, though no doubt all our movements were being watched by a hundred eyes.

Presently Báni suggested a drink of camel's milk all round. No sooner said than done. A she-camel was easily caught, milked into a panikin of wood (*jiddi*), and we all had a delightful drink. Coffee followed and we sat down for a twenty minutes' rest. Presently a

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meet the tip of the centre finger of the other hand. If this happens, 787
the undertaking will be attended with good luck. If exact contact does not take place, then on no account must the undertaking be carried out. This test is usually made three times.

Authority, Shaikh of Kuwait, 11 August, 1932.

NOTE.—Friday journeys or undertakings are quite legitimate but 777
only after noonday prayer has been performed. Never before.

TO BRING LUCK

When a Badawin eats dates, he throws the stones over his shoulder, believing that each stone so thrown means a camel acquired in a raid

Shaikh of Kuwait, 28th May, 1935.

TO BECOME A GOOD SHOT

If a Badawin wants to become a good shot, the common method 789
is to light a piece of cloth (cotton or wool) made up into a small ball. This as it smoulders is held very close to the right forearm, four inches behind the wrist knuckle bone. The ball should not be alight, but only smouldering, nor must the actual cloth ball be applied to the flesh. The heat of the burning piece of cloth soon raises a large blister about the size of a small matchbox. When this happens the operation is complete and the burning cloth is removed. Later the blister bursts and leaves an oblong raw spot, which in turn when it heals, leaves a scar to the man's dying day. This painful ordeal is considered among the Badawin to insure that the patient becomes a good shot with the rifle.

The present Shaikh of Kuwait had the operation done to him as a young man, and certainly he is a remarkable shot.

TO ACQUIRE COURAGE

Shaikh 'Ali al Khalifah told me on 12th November, 1938, that 828
among certain Badawin it was not uncommon for a man to eat the liver of a wolf to make him brave.